



Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters

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March 2, 2025

The Honorable Aric Putnam, Chair
Agriculture, Veterans, Broadband, and Rural Development Committee
Minnesota State Senate
75 Rev Dr Martin Luther King Jr Blvd
St Paul, Minnesota 55155

Dear Chairman Putnam and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of The Teamsters Rail Conference, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWED-IBT), and our Veteran members in Minnesota, I write today to **oppose SF 1894**.

The BMWED-IBT is proud to offer and encourage private expert support to our Veteran members. Our members are armed with all the information available to them and appreciate the ability to make the best choice for them and their families. We have been working closely with Veterans Guardian to educate our members on the full range of options available free of charge and for a fee. We are proud to ensure that our Minnesota Veteran members and brothers and sisters nationwide are well-informed and choose the best options for them.

As a Veteran myself and the Director of Government Affairs for the BMWED-IBT, I used Veterans Guardian to help me achieve an increase in my rating. Unfortunately, years of navigating the complicated Veterans Affairs process frustrated me. I tried the free services offered by Veteran Service Organizations, but while well-intentioned, they failed to meet my needs. Free doesn't always mean better, and I have the choice to decide who helps me with my claim.

Minnesota SF 1894 might be well-intentioned, but this issue has nuances and complications that require far more understanding.

Minnesota Veterans deserve a choice, and the BMWED members in Minnesota deserve the option to use companies like Veterans Guardian.

This bill is trying to accomplish a noble effort. Unfortunately, it takes away important options for the hard-working, dedicated brothers and sisters of the BMWED-IBT. I strongly urge you to vote against Minnesota SF 1894.

Sincerely,

Jeff Joines
Director of Government Affairs